

# Review of Potentials and Challenges of Ecotourism in Improving Nature Conservation in Developing Countries

Shabu Jemal Abakorma  
 Jimma University, P.O.Box, 307, Jimma, Ethiopia

## Abstract

Around the world, ecotourism has been hailed as a panacea: a way to fund conservation and scientific research, protect fragile and pristine ecosystems, benefits rural communities, promote development in poor countries, enhance ecological and cultural aspects. It is often positioned as an alternative to mass tourism, however, the understanding and implementation of the concept has been riddled with uncertainty. The ideal balance of conserving and developing at the same time is considered paradoxical not just for ecotourism but also related concepts like sustainability and improving nature conservations as well. This review paper critically examines the nature and application of ecotourism in improving nature conservations in developing countries. It adopted triangulation method which involved examination of two bases of information, on the one hand information from secondary sources including books, journals, and on the other hand from periodical bulletins. It was found that ecotourism has not achieved the objective of integrating conservation of biodiversity and the socioeconomic development of adjacent communities; one reason for the existing implementation problems has been the concept itself and how it has been operationalized. Furthermore, ecotourism in the developing countries has been plagued with issues related to non-realization of promised benefits, none or weak development structures and absence of efficient governance and management. Thus, the review recommends greater coordination between the stakeholders involved in ecotourism and of key interest, the participation of the government and the local community. The present reviewed sources are twofold; theoretical and empirical, that gives understanding of why the developing countries have not been able to sustainably develop ecotourism and provides the concerned parties with crucial insights on the possible actions for achieving the objectives of ecotourism in improving nature conservations.

**Keywords:** ecotourism, nature conservation, developing countries, sustainability

## 1. Introduction

With increasing frequency, ecotourism is proposed as a way of ensuring environmental conservation while enabling economic development. Developing countries, in particular are being encouraged by a set of diverse interest groups to consider ecotourism as a solution to their environmental and economic challenges (Bezabeh 1996; Ross and Wall 1999). The supporters of ecotourism as a development strategy include international financial institutions, global environmental organizations, global tourism businesses, national government and local communities, as well as individual who regarded themselves as eco tourists. In many ways ecotourism is being proposed as a tool for negotiating complicated relationships between these potentially conflicting interest groups. For example, ecotourism is often taught to provide a resolution to conflicts over the reservation of private land for national parks, because it enables local communities and private businesses to drive financial benefits from engaging with conservation (Duffy, R., 2002). The development of ecotourism is an effort to develop a market for one of the benefits of natural-area preservation, i.e., recreation. Ecotourism is in its ability to guarantee the long-term continuation of other natural-area benefits. However ecotourism market itself may contain negative externalities costs imposed on others and ignored in the operation of market exchange. Ecotourism should also function under the premises that, among other things, natural resources are finite and their appreciation and protection can be fostered through education, and the presence of supplementary sources of income from tourism will encourage residents to become stewards of their environment (GER 2005). Ideally, local populations may become advocates for protection of their natural resources and take pride in the unique surroundings which attract outsiders. Therefore ecotourism could be considered a “sustainable” activity, one that does not diminish natural resources being used while at the same time generating income (Matthews et al. 2002).

## 1.1. Objectives

### 1.1.1. General objective

- To review Potentials and challenges of Ecotourism in Improving Nature Conservation in Developing countries'

### 1.1.2. Specific objectives

- To review the potentials of ecotourism in developing countries
- To review the challenges of ecotourism in improving nature conservation
- To review the model ecotourism project that are practicing in improving natures

## **2. Ecotourism concepts and definitions**

Ecotourism can be broadly defined as nature-based tourism that does not result in the negative environmental, economic and social impacts that are associated with tourism (Duffy, R., 2002). It is known to promote low-impact, nature-friendly. The conservation of biodiversity and natural and cultural resources which is the underlying goal of protected-area management mainly practiced through ecotourism activities in improving nature conservation scenario (Kelktf, Celiks, and Bah 2010). Ecotourism is neither a simple concept to define nor a straightforward phenomenon to implement and evaluate. It should be regarded as being more than tourism to natural areas and should be viewed as a means of combining the goals of resource conservation and local development through tourism in a synergistic fashion. This means that care should be taken to ensure that the goals of tourism development do not interfere with the goals of protecting natural areas and biodiversity (Ross and Wall 1999). Ecotourism also defined as an ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation (Ecotourism Australia, 2015). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) is now defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015). Further explanatory research on the causal mechanisms among ecotourism benefits, the strength of local institutions, and conservation is recommended. In particular, scholars should examine the extent to which participatory approaches can help build social capital and thus provide local communities with the capacities to translate ecotourism into broader and locally-sustained goals of conservation and development in developing countries (Stronza and Gordillo 2008). American academic Martha Honey in her comprehensive new book, "Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, who owns paradise?" argues that 'real ecotourism' must involve seven vital and interrelated characteristics; travel to nature destinations; minimizing negative environmental impact; building environmental awareness; direct financial benefits for conservation; financial benefits and empowerment for local people; the respect of local culture; and the support of human rights and democracy" (Honey M, 1999).

### **2.1. Combination of ecotourism with nature tourism**

Nature tourism is a tourism in natural areas that leaves minimal impact on the environment. The primary role of nature in attracting tourists to specific destinations is now well understood and in this broad sense most tourism may be described as nature-based. Thus it is visit to destinations featuring attractions such as wildlife, flora and fauna, beautiful landscape, geographical features among others. For example, in Africa the work of Ferrario has identified the dominance of natural resources: using features listed in 10 travel guides, a total of 2,100 items were classified into 21 'resource' classes. The three most important classes were all natural (Valentine 1990). Laarman and Durst (1987) use the term 'nature travel' (or sometimes 'nature-oriented tourism') to refer toasty of tourism which 'combines education, recreation and of the adventure'. Boo (1990) in her major study of Latin America uses the title 'eco-tourism' as synonymous with 'nature tourism' which she uses throughout the work and defines as 'travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing 'cultural manifestations' (adopted from Ceballos-Lascurain). In both these concerns, environmental and social, nature based tourism in general ecotourism in particular, if they are respectful towards the natural environment and local culture, can become power full tools for sustainable development, and biodiversity conservation, improve nature condition and poverty alleviation (O et al. 2013). A few authors have attempted to differentiate the myriad of terms used to describe ecotourism. However, overall the literature fails to differentiate between these terms. An examination of the following expressions leads to the assumption that throughout the world a new form of tourism is being identified (Matthews et al. 2002).

## **3. Protected areas and ecotourism**

Over one hundred and thirty countries have established approximately 6,900 protected areas that cover nearly five percent of the earth's land surface using this method. By the late 1960s, international conservation and scientific organizations began to notice two phenomena occurring on different continents. In Africa, the fencing model was failing. Local people (who were often politically and ethnically marginalized rural poor), received little, if any, benefit from the protected areas and were often forcibly removed from the protected areas and placed on unsustainable areas around the park. They began to resent the park system and tourists who frequented the protected areas, and started to poach and degrade the protected areas' resources. Scientists, conservationists, park officials, and environmental organizations, concerned about the conflict between protected areas and local people, began to realize that if the protected areas and local people were going to peacefully coexist, the local people would need to derive some benefit from the protected areas and tourism (Kepe 2001).

Kenya was the first African nation to experiment with integrating environmental protection and economic development by placing control of several game reserves in the hands of local county councils. These councils received revenues from park entrance fees and hotels and other tourism facilities. In the mid-1980s, as the concept

of ecotourism began to take hold in East and southern-Africa, the stakeholders theory was broadened to encompass environmentally sensitive, low-impact culturally sensitive tourism that also helped educate visitors and local community members in improving nature as well as economically benefits from the activities (Neill 2002). Conservation organizations were formed and rallied support around the idea of lobbying governments to set aside land for the protection of animals and ecosystems in the belief that a positive feedback system could be institutionalized, so as more people had the opportunity to visit protected areas and see the beauty and wildlife within them more areas would be protected (Lindsey et al. 2005). Protected areas are often important destinations for alternative forms of tourism, such as ecotourism. Large conservation areas play an important role in attracting day tourists and increasing the added value to the region. Protected areas are prized assets for the tourism industry based on the beautiful natural resources they sustain. The tourist sector is reliant on having beautiful and attractive places, which are a source of wealth for the wider economy. Protected areas provide these special places. Tourism is often the most sizeable part of the local economy, and therefore protected areas can be regarded as a motor of sustainable regional and rural development (Stolton, 2009 as cited (EEA 2012)). Ecotourism usually involves visits to protected areas set aside by governments, conservation or scientific organizations, or private owners or entrepreneurs. Most of these protected areas are modeled after the U.S. National Parks System, which was established in the late nineteenth century to serve as a "pleasure grounds" for visitors. The Park System model is known as the fencing model because it establishes boundaries around areas to protect them and limit access to the resources contained within them. Yet stewardship will not emerge if local people perceive unacceptable costs associated with tourism and protected area restrictions, or if positive links to host communities are not strong and direct. Furthermore, if planning and decision-making do not involve local populations, then ecotourism will not succeed, and may even be detrimental to local communities especially for developing countries in improving nature conservations (Ross and Wall, 1999).

#### **4. Ecotourism opportunities in developing countries**

By the early 1990s, nearly non industrialized country was promoting ecotourism as part of developing strategy. In several countries, nature-based tourism mushroomed into the largest foreign exchange earner, surpassing bananas in Costa Rica, coffee in Tanzania and Kenya, and textile and jewelry in India. Namibia purportedly became the First developing country to include what has been dubbed an "ecotourism plank" in its new constitution, pledging to protect "ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity, natures...on sustainable basis". Some developing countries such as Costa Rica, and Belize are billed as ecotourism destination. Elsewhere pockets are promoted: Zanzibar, Mountain Kilimanjaro, and game parks in Tanzania, Amazonia, the high lands and the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador; the habitat of Mountain Gorillas in Uganda are most ecotourism destination that were promoted. In 1998, WTO predicted developing countries would continue to gain from the tourism boom and that international travelers would remain: "interested in visiting and maintaining environmentally sound destinations in improving nature conservations" (Honey M, 1999). Ecotourism provides clearly a major opportunity for developing countries as an emerging market, which holds a great promise for ecotourism development. The relatively undeveloped and/or unexploited areas of the country possess a rich natural diversity and a unique cultural and historical heritage which can provide a solid base for the nationally and internationally growing ecotourism activity. South Africa for example, hosts a great variety of climate zones and eco-systems, as impressive nature and wildlife are potential tourism resources and many historic sites (Lindsey et al. 2005). Such historic sites and monuments together with the living cultures preserving traditions like the Zulu heritage provide today outstanding tourist attractions. When exploiting this great potential, it is fundamental that ecotourism development takes place in a sound planning framework that ensures the conservation of the resources that ecotourism relies on and the meaningful participation of the host communities. The challenge faced in South Africa is obvious: there is a need to preserve and protect the fragile natural sites, wildlife and ecosystems, and at the same time there is a need to educate people and to create employment in order to fight poverty and misery. If properly managed, sustainable Ecotourism can provide for both these objectives, as it depends on intact nature, rich local culture and many services carried out by local people. If natural resources used wisely, for example, by providing sensitively designed tourist facilities in game parks and nature reserves and using the resulting income to manage those protected areas, conservation and development would become complementary forces. Ecotourism offers a win-win-situation for the benefit of the environment and the local economy (Stronza and Gordillo 2008). South Africa's resource base for tourism for example, is the exceptional and there needs to be a shared vision of its potential. Its tourism product relies on diversity for its appeal: accessible wildlife; varied and spectacular scenery, unspoilt wilderness areas; diverse cultures; and a climate varying from Mediterranean in the South to hot and dry elsewhere. There are unlimited opportunities for special interest activities for ecotourism (whale watching, sailing, fishing, white water rafting, hiking and bush survival, conservation and eco-tourism, wine tasting, golf) (Hristie, Ichristieworldbankorg, and Crompton 2001).

#### **4.1. The greening of tourism industry**

Tourism is one of ten economic sectors identified in the Green Economy Report, whose greening would increase prosperity, create employment and reduce poverty. Under a scenario of green investments, tourism would make an even larger contribution to GDP, with significant environmental benefits including reductions in water consumption (18%), energy use (44%) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (52%) ("Economy Report : main findings," 2012). The environment has taken center stage in tourism planning and development worldwide. Global climate change, zone loss, deforestation, disappearing the species and toxic waste were all considered crucial issues related to the sustainable tourism development. Conservation and preservation policies have reached considerable momentum in many developing countries. Referred to as greening the objective is for tourism to become both a tool for economic development while simultaneously preserving and conserving physical and cultural resources (F. William, et al., 1994, 1998). In order to enlarge the discussion of concepts, growth and potentials of developing countries, it is useful to examine case examples.

#### **4.2. Model ecotourism project examples in improving natures**

The first two projects (Brandon, 1993) were designed to use nature tourism as a vehicle to achieve conservation and development.

##### **4.2.1. Monarch butterfly project in Mexico**

The Monarch Joint Venture which is a partnership of Federal and State agencies, nongovernment organizations, and academic programs working together to support and coordinate efforts to protect monarch butterfly migration across the lower 48 United States. For several years, the Forest Service has generated MJV reports describing the Forest Service's accomplishments as a partner with the MJV. The Forest Service management actions that support monarch conservation include habitat restoration, maintenance, and enhancement; public education; research; and monitoring. In addition to providing milkweed host plants, one of the Forest Service's key objectives is to provide nectar sources across both regions, from spring through fall, to fuel monarchs during the migration (Service 2015). Visiting Mexico's monarchs in their remote winter roosting sites is a rare nature experience. The project makes sure capitalize on visiting with extensive time among the butterflies as well as a chance to enjoy authentic cultural encounters. Butterfly visitors demonstrate to the local populace that ecotourism can be as viable a source of economic well-being as resource development <http://www.smithclass.org/monmex/mex.htm> accessed on June 21, 2016.

##### **4.2.2. Community baboon sanctuary in Belize**

The CBS began as an experiment in community involvement in land management whose mission was to protect the black howler monkeys (called locally "baboons") on the private lands of over 150 subsistence farmers. The significance of the CBS in Belize was three fold: 1) it was the first time a community participated actively in conserving its land and protecting its wildlife, 2) the land being protected was private, and 3) the CBS was to act as a model for other communities country-wide. The step the seven communities of the CBS (Flowers Bank, Scotland Half Moon, Bermudian Landing, Double Head Cabbage, Willows Bank, St. Paul's Bank and Big Falls) took had a wide ranging effect by encouraging other communities directly and indirectly to participate in conservation and to participate in the new ecotourism industry that was soon to become one of the leading industries in Belize's economy (Young 2004). The CBS is a unique ecotourism destination in Belize. Visitation to the CBS has grown steadily over the last five years (on average >100 foreign visitors per month), and is centered on the village of Bermudian Landing (headquarters of the sanctuary). Currently, few landowners have personal or economic contact with visitors. Though it is one of best model of ecotourism activities playing great role in improving natures (Hartup 1994).

##### **4.2.3. Annapura conservation area in Nepal**

ACAP was launched in 1986 with the initiation of \*King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) to protect the environment with sustainable community development in Annapurna area by the local people without any intervention from the Nepalese Government and/or any other institutions. This is the first and the largest conservation area in Nepal that covers 7,629 sq. km. It is established with aim of: conserve and sustainably manage the natural resources and rich cultural heritage; and To promote ecotourism to improve livelihood of the local people in and around the region. With the successful experience of Integrated Conservation and Development Program (ICDP) in ACAP, the Trust started its program in the Manaslu region from the beginning of 1997 as the Manaslu Ecotourism Development Project with funding support of the Government of Nepal and the Asian Development Bank under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation's Second Tourism Infrastructure Development Project. The project was able to develop basic eco-tourism infrastructure in the area. MCAP completed the Ecotourism Project in 2001 (Lindsey et al. 2005).

##### **4.2.4. Bali Indonesia**

Bali Green Province – BGP which is Initiated on 22 February 2010, as the commitment of local stakeholder, aims to achieve Bali as a comfortable and sustainable destination, Develops 3 core programs,. Green Economy, Green Culture, Bali Clean and Green (Kim and Hong 2009). Ecotourism in Indonesia plays an important role in



developing sustainable tourism through culture and nature preservation and community empowerment, which elevate the level of community welfare which is one of famous model in developing countries(Wayan and Adnyani 2012).

## **5. Ecotourism and sustainability**

Tourism Advancing Sustainable Development Tourism is today one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. In 2012, one billion international tourists and over four billion domestic tourists are expected to travel the world, generating more than US\$ 1 trillion in international tourism receipts. The sector currently accounts for 5% of direct global GDP, 30% of the world's services exports and generates one in twelve jobs worldwide(" Economy Report: main findings," 2012). In looking closely at Costa Rica, the Galapagos Island, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Kenya, South Africa, and US, the assessed whether ecotourism is succeeding in its objectives of protecting the environment and benefiting local people in and developing countries. In spite of ecotourism enterprises' continued support of conservation, education, employment and healthcare initiatives as the report indicated(Muhanna 2006).

### **5.1. Sustainable Tourism as Conserving and Improving Natures**

The natural environment is central to ecotourism which has focus on biological and physical features. The conservation of natural areas and sustainable resource management are essential for planning, development and management of ecotourism. Valentine (1993) draws attention to the "two-way interaction" between ecotourism and the environment upon which it depends, by suggesting that one characteristic of ecotourism is that it both contributes to conservation as well as enjoyment of nature, thus merging these two dimensions. That is ecotourism involves a focus on nature as a primary motivation for travel with activities undertaken by tourists on the eco tour being based on further knowledge and awareness of nature(Matthews et al. 2002).

#### **Is Ecotourism the Path to Sustainability?**

Due to the problems associated with, and sometimes unfairly attributed to, conventional mass tourism, many academics and practitioners enthusiastically promote some 'ideal' forms of tourism – alternative tourism, appropriate tourism, soft tourism, responsible tourism, low-impact tourism, and ecotourism as the means of achieving sustainability in tourism development(Tourism 2003).

#### **5.1.1. Ecotourism is a key for biodiversity conservation for developing countries**

##### **Community-based ecotourism**

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) means different things to different people. The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as 'Travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people'. Community-based ecotourism (CBET) has become a popular tool for biodiversity conservation, based on the principle that biodiversity must pay for itself by generating economic benefits, particularly for local people. There are many examples of projects that produce revenues for local communities and improve local attitudes towards conservation, but the contribution of CBET to conservation and local economic development is limited by factors such as the small areas and few people involved, limited earnings, weak linkages between biodiversity gains and commercial success, and the competitive and specialized nature of the tourism industry(Matthews et al. 2002). Recently, the role that "community-ecotourism" can play in the region's social and economic development, as well as in helping to conserve biological diversity, has been under consideration. Many community-based natural conservation and development programs in Southern Africa are already marketing ecotourism. The first program was pioneered by Zimbabwe, with Campfire (Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources), a program that combines sport hunting with photo-safaris. In Botswana, communities have formed trusts, such as the Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust, established in 1992. By 1997, revenue from sport hunting and tourist campsites in this area reached \$150,000 and 85% of it was reinvested in other income-generating activities. In Namibia, many local communities are starting to involve themselves in tourism through the establishment of campsites. In response to the growth of demand for these activities and the lack of knowledge about their initiation and management, the Namibia Community-based Tourism Association was launched in October 1995. Both the EC and USAID support such projects in Namibia. In the Western province of Mozambique, wedged between the Cabora Bassa Dam and Zimbabwe, the Tchumo Tchato Community Program has been successfully launched. In Zambia, the ADMARE and Luangwa Integrated Resource Development programs are now consolidating. In South Africa, a traditional ecotourism destination, community-based schemes are mushrooming, especially in KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province(Hristie, Ichristieworldbankorg, and Crompton 2001). Many tourism attractions in developing countries are closely linked to biodiversity, such as protected areas, unspoiled mountains, beaches and islands, traditional ways of life and native culture, charismatic wildlife and natural landscapes. Developing countries control the largest proportion of global biodiversity. They comprise the majority of the Parties to the CBD, and many of the mega diverse developing countries are also mainstream tourism destinations with over 5 million international arrivals per year (South Africa, Peru, Mexico, and Brazil)(Brochure essential). Developing countries pay the major costs of biodiversity conservation, while

benefits often accrue to the global community. Therefore, mechanisms for direct money transfers, debt relief and debt-for-nature-swaps (DFNS) should continue to be established and promoted. The role that ecotourism can play in the conservation process varies between countries, and is influenced by the distance from markets, modes, and the accessibility and uniqueness of the area in question (Jamal, Borges, and Stronza 2006).

#### **5.1.2. Ecotourism certification as improving natures and service improvement provision**

Certification is defined as a voluntary process which assesses audits and provides written assurance that a facility, a product, process or service reaches specific standards. It offers a commercial logo for those who meet or exceed basic standards. In this context, ecotourism certification has a educative character, both by improving the environmental performance of ecotourism operators and the awareness of local authorities, local people and tourists on sustainable tourism opportunity (Elena & Nicula, n.d., 2011). Ecotourism and related certification programmers' tend to: (1) associate visitor experience to education, learning and 'appreciation' (modernity's rational values) rather than to interpretive and existential meaning-making; (2) be less than attentive to the cultural transformations that may be occurring as resident relationships to the natural [environment become co modified through ecotourism development; and (3) employ scientific management and resource managerialism that can further fragment human ecological relationships an issue that is sadly under examined in ecotourism research and in certification or monitoring initiatives (Jamal, Borges, and Stronza 2006). In Africa, *Ecotourism Society of Kenya (ESOK)* certifies the accommodation facilities based on social and environmental criteria. Thus, Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) ensures that the tourism products and services respect the business ethics, human rights, culture and environment. (Eco Tourism Kenya: The Eco-rating Certification Scheme). The ecotourism certification system of the Romanian Association of ecotourism for example is an adaptation of the Swedish certification system – Nature's Best – and ecotourism accreditation program Eco-certification to the Romanian specific in improving natures and tourist satisfaction. Finally, the certification system improves the current socio-economic environment requires orientation towards sustainable business, environment-friendly (Elena & Nicula, 2012).

#### **5.1.3. African tourism enterprises receiving environmental awards**

A number of tourist and travel businesses in Africa have received environmental awards in recent years. Among these are: a promotional product, Green Route in Zimbabwe; Tropical Nature and Cultural Safaris, Kenya; Phinda Resource Reserve Conservation Corporation Africa, South Africa; Il Ngwesi Lodge, Lewa Conservancy, Kenya; Serena Lodges and Hotels, Kenya; Zanzibar Serena Inn, Tanzania; Serena Tourism Promotion Services SA; the Inter-Continental, Nairobi; La Bourdonnais Hotel, Mauritius. A few travel associations have begun to promote and reward high environmental standards in countries of destination. The first Environmental Award by the American Association of Travel Agents (ASTA), in combination with Smithsonian Magazine, was given to Rwanda for the development of the Mountain Gorilla Sanctuary a few years ago (Hristie, Ichristieworldbankorg, and Crompton 2001).

#### **5.1.4. The African travel association :eco-tourism manifesto**

A number of professional organizations have begun to promote environmental codes of conduct for their members. WTO is currently developing a global code of ethics for tourism. A few years ago, the Africa Travel Association adopted an eco-tourism manifesto under which member countries pledge to:

- establish the machinery for protection of the ecology, natural resources and wildlife;
- enhance the quality of the tourist visit by easing the entry and exit formalities;
- create good infrastructure assuring easy access and to use trained personnel to highlight each country's unique appeal;
- establish rigid codes of quality for accommodation and services, making sure the local tourist economy does not overshadow the attraction; and
- work with transportation companies to make travel safe, comfortable and convenient.

The travel industry pledges to: · prepare the visitor by providing detailed information on the culture (Matthews et al. 2002); · provide clients with opportunities to participate in ecological and environmental programs; and · adhere to a strict code of truth in advertising by accurately describing facilities and costs. Visitors should be encouraged to: · respect the land and water, not only to avoid damaging, abusing or littering, but to contribute to the preservation and protection of these resources; · enjoy the wildlife in its natural habitat and refrain from harassment of these magnificent creatures; · honor the sensitivities, customs and culture of the people they are visiting and observe local rules of etiquette and behavior; · share and exchange cross-cultural ideas and keep an open attitude to local values; and · continue this habit of caring and concern upon returning home, by not supporting industries that harm ecosystems and the environment (Hristie, Ichristieworldbankorg, and Crompton 2001).

### **6. Challenges of ecotourism in developing countries**

There are various challenges for Ecotourism in terms of sustainability and involvement of local communities. In the case of developing countries, there are significant obstacles and challenges facing the execution of ecotourism,

these include; the lack of participation of host communities and other stakeholders in the development of ecotourism with a good example being the exclusion of the local communities in the process of creation and management of protected areas (O et al. 2013). Now here are the conflicting views over ecotourism more evident than the current debate over the function and purposes of protected areas. Such an opposition is illustrated and reinforced through accepted institutional arrangements in which tourism and conservation goals are pursued by independent organization (Wayan, N, et al., 2012). Ecotourism's impacts will be exacerbated by the growing tourist flows encouraged by the tour companies' marketing activities and the insatiable demand of increasingly large numbers of tourists for getting off the beaten track. 'Getting "off the beaten track" often means that the track soon becomes a road, even a highway' thus disturbing and even destroying the very few undisturbed areas of the world (Neill 2002). The current focus of the debate on tourism in park is the extension of a long controversy, a controversy that has existed since the conception of PA and equivalent reserves. The imperative for conservation advocates become how to conserve rather than whether or not conserve. In this way ecotourism, as a sustainable development strategy, is increasingly being turned to as part of political philosophy for PA managers and conservation agencies as a means of providing practical outcomes in the struggle to provide a bases for continued protection of these areas (Wayan N, et al., 2012).

### 6.1. Human wild life conflicts

Growing interest in ecotourism and the increasing presence of humans in protected areas are exacerbating conflict between humans and wildlife. The local capacity to manage and regulate public access and large-scale use of protected areas is weak. Equally, tourists are unaware of the dangers of wild animals. Each year, tourists are killed or injured by elephants, crocodiles, lions or other wildlife species in protected areas (Paper n.d.). The dramatic rise in lion attacks in the United Republic of Tanzania for example, since 1990 is most likely due to the human population increase in the country (from 23.1 million in 1988 to 34.6 million in 2002) and an associated increase in illegal bush meat hunting that has eradicated much of the lions' prey from outside the protected areas. This in turn has forced the lions to enter villages and feed on livestock (Barnett, 2000; Nowell and Jackson, 1996). Similarly, in the Kakum Forest Reserve in Ghana, wildlife was frequently killed as a result of intensive logging and hunting before the area was officially gazetted as a national park in 1989. This adversely affected the number of prey, thereby forcing predators to look for food outside the reserve.

**Natural characteristics of wildlife:** The intrinsic characteristics of wildlife, such as food preferences, migration patterns, wariness or predation behavior, can influence human-wildlife conflict. Some particularly palatable food items can attract wildlife over rather long distances. This is the case for some crops. For instance, according to Barnes *et al.* (2003), of the crops planted outside the Kakum National Park in Ghana, maize and cassava particularly attract elephants. Maize is also the crop most frequently raided in the area around the Djona hunting zone in North Benin. It is raided twice as often as cotton, and far more often than groundnut and millet (Alfa Gambari Imorou *et al.*, 2004). On 9th August 2012, in Kenya for example the EK was invited by Nation Television to express an expert opinion on the escalation of human-wildlife conflicts situation in the country. In case Community-initiated Conservancies were highlighted at best ecotourism models to mitigate Human - Wildlife Conflict was reported <http://www.ecotourismkenya.org> accessed on July 8, 2016.

## 7. Impacts of ecotourism

Ecotourism is known to promote low-impact, nature-friendly tourism activities in protected areas. These activities may sometimes involve unnatural applications and lead to alterations of landscape structure and function. Even though ecotourism was ideally seen as understanding of and respecting sensitive ecosystems, environmental degradation may occur due to the arrangements of less-suitable landscape elements such as extended concrete pavements (Booth and Jackson, 1997) or the introduction of exotic plants (Matthews et al. 2002).- and the use of chemicals (insecticides and pesticides); environmental pollution and destruction may escalate further in the camping and picnic areas in the form of trampling and removal of some vegetation. All these undesirable actions contradict the concept of ecotourism. There are too many examples of this in many countries, particularly in developing countries such as Maldives, Nepal, Peru, Kenya, Costa Rica, Ecuador, South Africa, Botswana, Mexico, Zimbabwe, Nairobi, Guatemala, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, and Brazil (Kelktf, Celiks, and Bah 2010).

### 7.1. Economic leakages

The other impacts of ecotourism facing developing countries is the economic leakages from tourism which perceived as being solely foreign exchange leakages, for example from a foreign-owned hotel to the transnational corporation elsewhere. The direct income for an area is the amount of tourist expenditure that remains locally after taxes, profits, and wages are paid outside the area and after imports are purchased; these subtracted amounts are called leakage (Kelktf, Celiks, and Bah 2010). In most all-inclusive package tours, about 80% of travelers' expenditures go to the airlines, hotels and other international companies (who often have their headquarters in the

travelers' home countries), and not to local businesses or workers. In addition, significant amounts of income actually retained at destination level can leave again through leakage. In case of each US\$ 100 spent on a vacation tour by a tourist from a developed country, only around US\$ 5 actually stays in a developing-country destination's economy. A study of tourism 'leakage' in Thailand for example estimated that 70% of all money spent by tourists ended up leaving Thailand (via foreign-owned tour operators, airlines, hotels, imported drinks and food, etc.). Estimates for other Third World countries range from 80% in the Caribbean to 40% in India.

#### **Two main ways that leakage occurs**

**Import leakage-** occurs when tourists demand standards of equipment, food, and other products that the host country cannot supply. Especially in less-developed countries, food and drinks must often be imported, since local products are not up to the hotel's (i.e. tourist's) standards or the country simply doesn't have a supplying industry. Much of the income from tourism expenditures leaves the country again to pay for these imports.

**Export leakage-** Multinational corporations and large foreign businesses have a substantial share in the import leakage. In poor developing destinations, MNCs are the only source of investment capital to construct tourism infrastructure and facilities. Thus an export leakage arises when overseas investors who finance the resorts and hotels take their profits back to their country of origin <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/home.htm>: accessed on July 9, 2016

#### **Conclusions**

The review highlights the opportunities and challenges of ecotourism in improving natures mainly in developing countries, although this is not an easy task. With the recent increase in tourism oriented around authentic experiences of culture and nature, many countries that are poor, but rich in cultural and natural resources, have seized the opportunity to use the ecotourism sector as a machine for growth and improving nature recently. To be successful, countries must be able to define their own assets in a way that meets tourists' demands in general and improves natures in particular. As the current generation of tourists includes sophisticated travelers that pay a lot of attention to cultural and natural issues, accurate identification and description of a country's cultural and natural assets is an important step in ecotourism planning. The controversy existing in most developing countries is how to balance the need for short-term benefits with the need to manage and use natural resources over the long-term. A key concept from this review is that ecotourism can work to provide economic gain for the host communities while conserving natural resources and as well as essential for biodiversity conservations. Enhancing income generating opportunities and quality of life for human populations in proximity to protected areas will contribute to the attainment of the objectives of wildlife conservation in the park as well as initiating ecotourism activities. The actions of greening tourism started mainly in few countries, community based wild life management practices, as may taken as best examples for improving natures and answering local livelihood. The effectiveness of ecotourism as a means of boosting local community livelihoods and enhancing conservation was seen to be attainable only through the active participation of local communities. However, countries embracing ecotourism will be challenged to devise strategies that thoroughly incorporate the local community in policy and planning, poor services and infrastructure facilities, human wild life conflicts, economic leakages are facing for developing of ecotourism activities in improving natures which is requires attentions. The other good scenario is implementing a system of quality certification of ecotourism services, companies in the area might get a better image and an element of differentiation from competition, resulting beneficial effects on the profile market by reducing costs and improving performance. Thus, certification schemes can turn into a source of income through the loyalty of ecotourism service users as well as powerful for in improving nature conservation systems.

#### **Recommendation**

The following points are recommended from the scenario of ecotourism as improving nature conservation in developing countries as currently reviewed resource indicated:

- ✓ All participants understand and accept their responsibilities and are environmentally motivated, policies should eventually emerge that reflect the needs and interests of all concerned.
- ✓ Government policy makers and tourism industry official must be accept the challenge ,responsibility, and mandate of bringing market forces in to congruence with the need for environmental protection and social equity especially in improving of livelihoods local people.
- ✓ Motivating the participation of all stakeholders (including local communities) in ecotourism industry
- ✓ The active involvement of the local communities is needed to retain much of the revenue from ecotourism activities and for them to help in the sustainable use of natural resources especially forestry and wildlife management as improving nature conservation
- ✓ Initiating the community-Based Natural Resource Management programs involving local communities in several modes of wildlife valorization and promising alternative for mitigating human-wildlife conflict
- ✓ Inviting investors in ecotourism industries to minimize economic leakages is recommended.



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## Notes

Table 1. Alternative terms for “ecotourism”

<i>Adventure travel</i>	<i>Low impact tourism</i>
Alternative tourism	Natural areas travel
Anthropological tourism	Nature-based tourism
Appropriate tourism	Nature oriented tourism
Biotourism	Nature tourism
Community-based tourism	Nature travel
Cultural tourism	Nature vacations
Ecological tourism	Non-consumptive wildlife recreation
Ecotravel	Resource based tourism
Eco-tourism	Responsible tourism

Source:( Mattews,etl,2002)

The following figure shows how economic leakage happens.

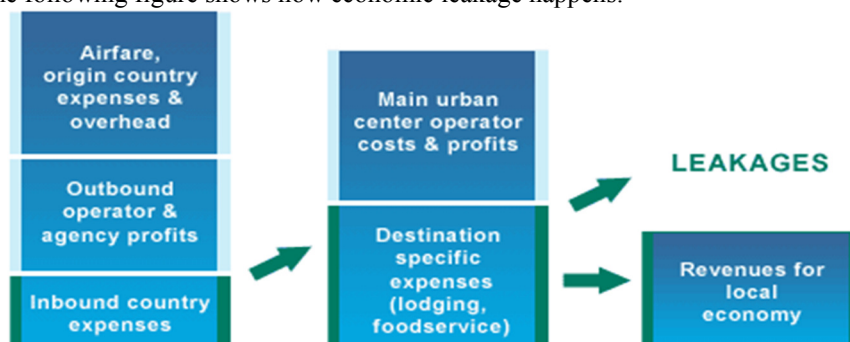


figure 1. How the leakage happens.

<http://www.unep.org/resourceefficiency> accessed on July 8,2016